

Pathways to Work for Young Adults



Rules for Life

11 RULES YOU DID NOT—OR WILL NOT—LEARN IN SCHOOL

- RULE #1: Life is not fair—get used to it!
- RULE #2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.
- RULE #3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice president with a car phone until you earn both.
- RULE #4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait until you get a boss.
- RULE #5: Flipping burgers is NOT beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping—they called it **opportunity**.
- RULE #6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes. Learn from them.
- RULE #7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.
- RULE #8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.
- RULE #9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.
- RULE #10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.
- RULE #11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

Top 10 List

1. **First impression:** Neat appearance is of the utmost importance when applying for jobs. A negative first impression results in not being hired 90% of the time.
2. Don't apply in pairs or groups. **Apply alone.**
3. **Be persistent.** You may have to fill out many apps to get one job offer.
4. **Thank-you note:** send immediately after the interview.
5. **Follow up:** Check back with the employer within 1-2 weeks to inquire if they have made a hiring decision yet.
6. Once you have completed filling out an application, **ask to talk to the person in charge of hiring.** This is an opportunity to introduce yourself and let the employer know why you want to work for them and what qualifications make you suited for the job. Keep it short. This is not the interview, yet.
7. **Fill out the application neatly.** The employer may assume if the application is filled out sloppy that it may be an indication of your quality of work.
8. **Prepare for the interview.** Know yourself. What makes you stand out? What proof do you have that shows you are dependable and hard working? This is time to sell yourself. State with confidence your skills, personal traits, accomplishments and activities that make you suitable for the job.
9. **Be upbeat and enthusiastic** during the entire job hunting process.
10. Once hired, work hard and **go beyond the call of duty.**



Employers are looking for certain attributes in an applicant.
They want to make sure you can do the job. An application should show the actual skills you possess,
and where you learned those skills.
It is important to show the employer all the skills you do have.
If you have no work history, it is easy to assume you do not have many skills, but this is not the case!

Some basic skills employers are looking for:

Communication (spoken, written, and listening):

- Have you taken public speaking class at school?
- Are you involved in any peer counseling at school?
- Are you involved in any clubs?
- Are you involved with the school newspaper, radio or TV?
- Do you volunteer anywhere? {i.e. Spend time with elderly people, read to kids at Boys and Girls Club, etc.}
- Are you involved on any kind of sports team?

Computational (performing basic arithmetic functions):

- What math classes have you taken at school?
- Do you have your own checking account?
- Have you started your own lawn mowing or babysitting business?
- Are you involved in the financial aspect of any club or organization? {i.e. treasurer}

Reading and following instructions:

- What is your grade point average? {Usually a high GPA denotes a good listener and direction follower}
- Have you been involved with any projects or organizations? {Did you help a family member organize a fund-raiser? Did you complete a scouting project or paper drive?}
- Is one of your favorite hobbies reading? {This is a hard one to show quantitative results for, but something nice to put in the *hobbies/talents* section of a job application}
- Are you involved with sports at all?

Thinking Skills:

Thinking creatively:

- Are you involved in any clubs? [Have you had several creative ideas on how to increase membership?]
- What creative classes have you had? [i.e. Creative writing, drama, dance, anything that causes you to creatively express your ideas, or figure out new ways to do things.]
- Did you design flyers to advertise anything?
- Are you on any kind of sports team, where you must creatively try existing techniques or develop your own?

Making decisions and solving problems:

- Are you involved in school leadership? Anything to do with school government? Are you an officer in a club or other organization like a church group, scouting or volunteer organization?
- Are you involved in any sports?
- Have you done any kind work, be it babysitting, mowing lawns, or selling lemonade?
- Once again a high GPA usually tells the employer that you make good decisions and know how to solve problems when they arise.

Knowing how to learn and reason:

- Have you ever held a leadership role?
- Your grade point average factors in here again!
- Have you helped organize any kind of event with a club or organization? [Show how you learned during the process of organizing the event.]
- Again, are you involved in a sport?

Personal Qualities

Personal qualities: responsibility and dependability, self-esteem/self-worth, self-management/self-discipline, honesty, attitude, initiative and judgment.

- Have you ever done any volunteer work? {Volunteering shows that you can commit to something & be responsible for showing up when you are supposed to.}
- Are you involved with any sports?
- Are you involved with any clubs or other organizations?
- Have you won any awards for poetry, sporting activities, leadership, grades, drama, dancing, karate, etc.? {Excelling in any of these activities lets the employer know you have self-discipline, initiative, self-management and a host of other job related skills.}

It is important to remember when filling out an application that you can't just say, "I communicate well," or "I am a fast learner." If you do not back up such statements, they have little value. You must justify where you learned to communicate well, or why you consider yourself a fast learner.

Also, do not sell yourself short! Brainstorm all the things you have done, even if they seem minor, then pull out the most relevant information and skills as you need them! Most likely they show that you can do one of the things the employer is looking for. Consider your hobbies, how do they fit into this framework?

Here are a **few more skills** employers are often on the lookout for:

- Effective use of time, money and facilities.
- Working well with others, team work.
- Teaching, training or sharing skills with others.
- Customer service.
- Leadership abilities.
- Negotiation ability, problem solving.
- Working well with diversity.
- Using computers to communicate information.
- Monitoring and correcting your performance.
- Always trying to improve.
- Positive attitude and good work ethic.

Tips for Completing Job Applications



Your application can be the employer's first impression of you. They can tell many things about you just by "reading between the lines" on your application. The first and most important thing to remember in filling out your application is visual impact. Pay close attention to what is being asked and how you're expected to respond. Use words and expressions that are clear, concise and easily interpreted.

- Read the entire application first.
- Follow the directions on the application.
- Complete each work history.
- Use complete words.
- Salary requirements – it is best to give a salary range or to respond with "negotiable."
- Do not write "see resume."
- Meet the application deadline.
- Do not leave unexplained gaps in employment history.
- If you only completed the 10th grade but have a GED, mark applications that ask for highest grade completed as 12th.
- Illegal questions – applications may contain questions that are tricky or even illegal. If the question doesn't bother you, answer it. If it does, you may want to use N/A or a dash (-) but beware, you may get screened out.
- Present a positive, honest picture of yourself.
 - Show you are the right person for the job.
 - Think of what you would look for in an employee.
- Target your qualifications.
 - Carefully select the words you will use on your application to avoid using unnecessary space.
 - Research the company prior to filling out the application.
- Carry a completed application to use as a guide for filling out other applications.

Filling out the Application

Employment Application

The following Employment Application is available at the Missoula Job Service website. Download the application, fill it out and save it to a disk or flash drive. Your application will look great every time and will only take a few minutes to review and submit for the next opening.

General Instructions:

- Ask for two copies (or make a copy) if you are not downloading the application.
- Use black or blue ink or type - downloaded application is BEST.
- Print; do not use cursive – on the downloaded application use the standard font.
- If you make an error start over or put one line through the error - do not black it out or use white-out.

- Fill in the blanks; use N/A (not applicable) if it doesn't apply to you.
- Keep your application neat, clean and unfolded—or start over!
- Be honest and present the information in a positive way.

Specific instructions:

- Job Title: For every application this should be as specific as possible. If you are applying for a specific job—use that job title. If you would like to be considered for several jobs, list them. Do not put “anything.”
- Message Phone: Find a message number that you have permission to use, that is checked EVERY day and that the message will get to you EVERY day.
- E-mail Address: Check EVERY day.
- Work Experience:
 - Begin with present or most recent employment.
 - Include volunteer work.
 - List each promotion as a separate position.
 - You must fill out this section, even if attaching a resume.

References

All references should be:

- Adults.
- Preferably employed.
- Known for at least one year.
- Want to help; have given you permission to use their name.
- Accessible and reachable by phone.
- Prepared to talk specifically about your skills, knowledge and personal qualities - must have a copy of your resume or master application to do this.

Sources of references:

- Co-workers (current or former).
- Neighbors (current or former) .
- Youth group advisor.
- Friends or friends of the family.
- Landlord.
- School contacts: coaches, club sponsors, etc.
- Business contacts.

Normally don't use:

- Former employers.
- Relatives (or people who have the same last name as you).
- Members of the clergy.

Signature and Date

Date the application and sign it!

INCOMPLETE OR UNSIGNED APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED

Follow up

Once you have turned in an application, you should be prepared to follow-up on a weekly or biweekly basis with the personnel department or secretary of the person who will do the hiring. Remind them you are still available, still interested and have something to offer them. Do not be pushy! These contacts may be made by calling on the phone (remember to smile when talking on the phone, it changes your attitude and makes your voice more pleasant), walking into the office or mailing a quick note. If the personnel department or the secretary sees you as friendly, tactful, energetic and having a good attitude, you can bet that message will reach the interviewer. You may create an ally who will help to get your application a little higher on the pile or, unwittingly, an enemy who can destroy your best efforts. It never pays to be discourteous, tactless or inconsiderate to anyone. It can cost you a job.

Yes, think of how you dress!

- First impressions are crucial. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
- Dress conservatively. Don't overdress or under dress. Call the company and ask or visit the company to observe what employees are wearing. Caution: Be sure you aren't there on a casual day!
- Wear clean and tied shoes.
- Clean and trimmed fingernails.
- Minimal cologne or perfume.
- No visible body piercing beyond conservative ear piercing for women.
- Well brushed teeth and fresh breath.
- No gum, candy or other objects in your mouth.
- Minimal jewelry.
- Take a bath and use deodorant for NO body odor.
- Hair should be clean and combed. No wild hairdos or colors.
- Remember – what is fashionable may not always be business-like.

You are marketing a product – yourself – to a potential employer. Will dressing properly get you the job? Of course not, but it will give you a competitive edge and a positive first impression.

Your manners make a statement. If you are courteous and thoughtful, it says that you get along with people and you have a respect for seniority. Good manners are important. They show you are civilized and sociable.

Create a Good Impression

Manners, Business Etiquette and Attitude in the Interview

Manners and business etiquette:

- Arrive early – 15 minutes before the interview. It indicates whether you are reliable and whether you will show up for work on time.
- The interview really starts at the front door. Be very pleasant and very courteous when you check in with the receptionist or secretary – you can bet they will give the manager some feedback on what they thought of you once you have left the building.

- Be patient when waiting for the interview – even though you have an appointment.
- Offer a firm handshake.
- Use eye contact.
- Sit straight in the chair – not leaning back. It shows you are alert and interested. Sit only when invited to sit – show respect to the manager’s territory.
- Arms resting – not folded.
- Control nervous behaviors (tapping feet, pen).
- Respond by smiling or nodding your head – shows interest.
- Control giggling or laughing.
- If the telephone rings during the interview, don’t be “all ears.” Distract yourself.
- If someone comes into the manager’s office during the interview, stand up – it might be the manager’s boss.
- Always accept a soft drink or water if it is offered. It shows that you are sociable.
- Apply alone.
- Don’t argue about anything, even baseball.
- Don’t carry your coat into the manager’s office. Carrying it says you can’t wait to get out of there.
- Allow enough time for the interview.
- Be prepared – know what position you are applying for, bring:
 - Your resume.
 - Your references.
 - Your ID.
 - Social Security Card.
 - A notebook and pen (write the manager’s name, address and phone number in your notebook).
 - Prepared questions to ask the employer.

Attitude: It separates the winners from the losers. It can be more important than experience and makes a statement. If you act enthusiastic and eager, the impression is that you are an enthusiastic and eager worker. If you act too timid or too quiet, it implies that you may need a lot of supervision. Managers are looking for someone who is motivated and who is excited about coming to work.

Sample Interview Questions

The following are questions you will most likely be asked on an interview. It is a good idea to prepare and rehearse the answers to these questions so that you feel comfortable answering them during the interview.

- Tell me about yourself.
This question is meant for you to talk about your skills and abilities to do the job.
- What are your strengths?
Tell the employer about what you do best and the positive work values that you’ll bring to the job.
- What are your weaknesses?

Give the employer something that is not really a weakness.

Example—"I'm a perfectionist."

- Why do you want to work here?
Give the employer reasons why you chose to apply for the job.
Example—The job fits your skills and you know that you can make a significant contribution to the company.
- What is your greatest accomplishment?
This can be school-related achievements or something outside of school in your personal life.
- Why should I hire you?
Talk about your skills and achievements.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE THEM

Questions to ask Employers

One of the key elements to succeeding on an interview is to be sure to ask the employer some questions. Employers expect you to ask questions about the job or the company. It shows them that you are really interested in working for them!

- What are the responsibilities of this job?
- Can you tell me where my career may go in this company, if I work hard in this position?
- What qualifications do you hope the successful candidate will have?
- What is the most important contribution that you hope the successful candidate will make in this position?
- How will I be trained to do this job?
- How often is performance reviewed in this position?
- Who do I report to?
- Describe the work environment.
- Why is this position open?
- Describe a typical day.
- When will the position start?
- Is there a dress code?

It begins even before you say your first word in an interview. By the time the interviewer walks toward you, an opinion is already being formed. There you sit, waiting to spew out your answers to questions you've prepared for, while you are already being judged by your appearance, attitude, posture, smile or nervous look and manners.

Reasons People Don't Get Hired

- Poor personal appearance.
- Overly aggressive.
- Inability to express information clearly.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm.
- Lack of planning for career; no purpose and no goals.
- Nervousness, lack of confidence and poise.
- Over emphasis on money.
- Unwillingness to start at the bottom.
- Lack of tact and courtesy.
- Lack of maturity.
- Negative attitude about past employers.
- No genuine interest in company or job.
- No eye contact with the interviewer.
- No sense of humor.
- Late for interview.
- Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
- Failure to ask questions about the job.
- Gives vague responses to questions.
- Application form is incomplete or sloppy.

After Interview Checklist

Date: _____

First call-back date: _____

Your interviewer's name: _____

Company name: _____

To be filled out immediately after the interview

		YES	NO
1.	Did you arrive 15 minutes early?		
2.	Did you wear appropriate clothing?		
3.	Were you friendly with the people you came in contact with?		
4.	Did you introduce yourself to the interviewer?		
5.	Did you state your qualifications? If yes, what qualifications did you mention?		
6.	Did you give the interviewer a copy of your resume?		
7.	Did the interviewer discuss anything from your personal background? If yes, what points did the interviewer talk about? Were they on your application or resume?		
8.	Did the interviewer comment on any of your skills? If yes, what did the interviewer say? Were those skills included on your application or resume?		
9.	Did you offer the interviewer a firm handshake?		
10.	Did you look at the interviewer when you spoke to them?		
11.	Did you show good posture and no nervous mannerisms?		
12.	Did you mention who referred you or if you know someone working at the company?		
13.	Did you state your desire for work and interest in the company?		
14.	Did you state your interest in part-time or temporary employment?		
15.	If no jobs are available at this place, did you ask if they know of any job openings at any other company?		
16.	Do you think the interview went well?		
17.	Did you send a thank-you note?		

Thank-you Note Samples

Date _____

Dear Mr. Jones:

I just wanted to express my thanks and tell you I enjoyed our conversation today. The
_____ job is one I definitely want.

I believe my skills and experience prove I have something to contribute, and I look forward to the opportunity of working at _____(Company Name)_____. Not only did I enjoy meeting you and hearing about your company, but I am confident I can do the job for you.

(Note: you may add information here you feel is necessary, but was not mentioned in the interview. But keep it short.)

I will contact you in a few days in the hope that you have reached a decision.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Smith

Date _____

Dear Mr. Jones:

I just wanted to express my thanks and tell you how much I enjoyed our conversation today. The _____ job sounds very interesting.

I believe my skills and experience really qualify me for this position. I am more enthusiastic than ever about the position you have open, especially after meeting you and hearing about your growing company.

I will call you in a few days in the hope that you have reached a decision favorable to both of us at that time.

Sincerely,

John Smith

P.S. I was really impressed by the stamps you have mounted on display in your office. I am also a collector and would welcome any advice you can give me on the subject. (**NOTE)

NOTE: This letter is to be handwritten immediately after the interview and sent to the employer on the same day.

Do not use the type of P.S. shown above unless the employer was enthusiastic in discussing an item in his or her office.

You may also use the P.S. to add information you feel is necessary but was not mentioned in the interview.